



The Jewish

Gaily Forward

Cheshvan + Kislev + Tevet 5773 ■ November + December 2012

What's Up at Sha'ar Zahav

EVERY MONDAY NIGHT

Weekly Torah Portion Study, 7:30 pm

Come and study the weekly Torah Portion with Daniel Chesir and Rabbi Camille Shira Angel at CSZ.

JANUARY 2013, TBD

Family Estrangement: Healing the Pain

**A Spiritual Support Group
Rabbi Camille Angel and Kim Haveson, LCSW**

6 monthly sessions starting in January 2013, dates to be decided. Sliding fee scale—no one to be turned away for lack of funds. If there is an estrangement in your family-of-origin, join Rabbi Angel and Kim Haveson, LCSW in this group. Together we will explore and move through issues of anger, confusion, grief, forgiveness, and healing in a safe and supportive environment. For more information, contact Kim Haveson at (415) 285-6035.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19

Interfaith Thanksgiving Service, 7:30 pm

Join with our neighborhood faith communities for a service of praise, prayer, and song from our many faith traditions. We invite you to join us as we give thanks for the many gifts in our lives. We will be collecting nonperishable food items (no glass please) and cash donations for the San Francisco Food Bank.

Celebrating 5 Years with Cantor Sharon Bernstein

BY KAREN SCHILLER

Five years ago Congregation Sha'ar Zahav took a huge step toward our future and, thanks to the generosity of our donors, hired our first cantor—Cantor Sharon Bernstein. Since then we've been delighted by her music, her teachings, and the *ruach* (spirit) she brings to the bimah.

Looking back, Cantor Bernstein marveled that, "For the past five years, I've had the opportunity to work closely with our amazing lay and professional leaders on creating innovative, beautiful, relevant, meaningful, and fun communal, musical, and ritual experiences. I'm so incredibly lucky to be part of this community of my dreams." Her highlights include Shabbes Beat (the musical service held the third Friday of the month (check out the next one on **Friday, November 16 at 7:30pm**), Shabbat Simcha experiential learning services, working on our Siddur, the CSZ Chorus and Gay Iz Mir Klezmer Band, the innovative Yom Kippur Mincha service, Niggun services (including chanting and meditation), Klezmer Shabbat, creating blessings for different moments in individual and congregational life, writing and performing a Cantata for Transgender Celebration Shabbat with Rabbi Reuben Zellman, interfaith encounters, creating a healing journey, and multitudes of Shabbat and holiday services.

Rabbi Angel very much appreciates working with Cantor Bernstein. She said, "I feel blessed, and believe our community has been incredibly blessed, to have Sharon as our cantor. Her warm heart and beautiful smile infuse" (continued on page 5)



Torah Study: Judaism's Sanctuary



"WHEN WE arrive before the heavenly tribunal," the rabbis of the Talmud imagined that, at the end of our lives, we will be judged as to how well we've lived. We will be asked four questions and chief among them, (according to Maimonides' ranking), will be: *Kavaata Itim Latorah?* "Did you set aside time for the study of Torah?"

For Judaism, study of the Torah is the most highly valued activity. Study is the supreme mitzvah, the highest value.

Study is the means by which Jewish ethical and religious teachings are preserved and transmitted. Without continuous study, tradition would come to an abrupt halt. Judaism would become a fossil, a relic for investigation rather than a living and a lived faith.

But, while study of the Torah serves to perpetuate Judaism, and while it has its own intrinsic value, study of Torah has been understood to have other goals and functions, including the creation of an artful life.

The study of the Torah can serve as a conduit to knowledge of one's heritage, knowledge of one's own self, and as a catalyst for connection with the Divine.

The text of the Torah is a door to intimacy with its Author. According to Aaron HaLevi of Barcelona, study of Torah is an entrée to love of God and to communion with God. According to another sage, Mordecai of Chernobyl, "the goal is not only to study Torah, but to *become* Torah."

The Talmud requires one to recite a blessing thanking God for commanding one to be "occupied with words of Torah" (*la-asok be-divrei Torah*). Commenting on this text, Judah Loew, the 16th century Jewish mystic of Prague, observes that this blessing does not state that one should merely "study" the Torah, but that one should be "occupied" with the Torah. According to Loew, study is not limited to being an academic exercise, but should be an experience in which all aspects of the person are engaged. Study is meant to reflect a personal commitment. It is learning to become what one knows, how to build a life as a work of art from the raw materials granted

through study, how to translate classical texts into a contemporary, relevant, and compelling message. "Let the Torah never be for you an antiquated decree...but one issued this very day," and "when one occupies oneself with the study of Torah, one should say: It is as if I received Torah from Sinai today." (Pesikta deRav Kahana, Solomon Buber)

The goal of study is not merely to amass information, but to bring about the spiritual transformation of the individual.

It is the quintessential Jewish, spiritual practice of self-development. Ever since, the Destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 C.E.—2000 years ago—the Torah has served as Judaism's sanctuary. Study and prayer have replaced sacrifice, and yet study and prayer continue to fulfill the purpose of sacrifice, to bring one closer to God.

One truth I hold dear is that the study of Torah brings me closer to those with whom I study. I hope you'll consider joining our weekly Congregation Sha'ar Zahav Torah Study group, Monday Nights — 7:30-8:30pm. Daniel Chesir and I look forward to learning with you and building community.

Side note:

Jewish law elevates the sanctity of the house of study above the house of prayer, thereby indicating the priority of study the Torah over prayer. For example, in the 16th century legal code, Shulchan Arukh, Jewish law permits a synagogue to be converted into a school, but prohibits a school from being converted into a synagogue.

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Congregation Sha'ar Zahav is a member of the Union for Reform Judaism, the World Congress of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Jews, and the San Francisco Organizing Project



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Strategic Plan Update



THREE MONTHS ago we began implementing our Strategic Plan. As you will recall, five Task Forces were created to focus on specific strategies related to Membership, Programming, Connections, Ritual, and Finance. Each of the Task Forces is led by one of the congregation's officers, plus a co-chair in some cases.

We set High Holy Days as our first reporting benchmark. I'd like to use my column to publicize the wonderful progress that each of the Task Forces has made as of the benchmark date.

Membership

One of the first priorities for the Membership Task Force was creating ways to collect contact information for potential members who have had contact with the synagogue. High Holy Days was a great time for interaction with potential members, since so many nonmembers purchase tickets for our services. At weekly Shabbat services, the lobby greeters have sign in sheets for guests. Potential members we identified at High Holy Days and Dolores Street guests will be contacted by Task Force members who will gauge whether there is an interest in joining CSZ.

When someone indicates an interest in joining the synagogue, the Membership Task Force serves as a primary contact. The new member interview is circulated to the Va'ad, and new members are invited to meet the congregation leadership at the monthly Va'ad meeting.

Connections

The Connections Task Force defines its mission as creating a community in which every member feels not just welcome, but truly connected, supported and known. The means to that end will come from building social networks and a culture of close personal relationships throughout CSZ.

One of the most traditional ways of developing community connections is through a network of *chavurot* (loosely

used to mean friendship circles). An initial goal of the Connection Task Force is to analyze the *chavurot* that have been successful at CSZ in the past, and what types might be useful now. The task force is also developing a plan for a *bikkur cholim* class on Jewish ethics and practical skills in meeting the needs of congregants who are ill.

Programming

On Rosh Hashanah, a call went out to the audience at the Herbst Theater to become more involved in the life and daily activities of the congregation. Andrew Ramer's pitch at the service listed a score of talents that our members possess and wove those talents into activities that contribute to making Congregation Sha'ar Zahav a vital, dynamic community. The Programming Task Force was ready for the audience's response to Andrew's message with signup sheets in the lobby. And the audience did not disappoint. It was very encouraging to see how many people expressed their commitment to the congregation by joining one of the task forces that day.

On Yom Kippur, the Programming Task Force organized an afternoon breakout session to talk about Strategic Plan implementation. Over 30 people showed up to share their ideas and suggestions. Two couples in the session were not CSZ members. The enthusiasm in the room must have been contagious, because one of the couples filled out a membership application when the session ended. The other couple said that they needed to figure out why they are still members somewhere else if they feel this comfortable at Congregation Sha'ar Zahav.

The Programming Task Forces has also been in contact with members of the First Mennonite Church to discuss social action programming that our two communities might do together.

Ritual

Congregation Sha'ar Zahav offers a variety of religious and spiritual experiences. The Ritual Task (continued on page 4)

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Force has begun analyzing how our community responds to this variety and to gauge what is appealing. One method of analysis is to track attendance at services. Naturally, there are myriad factors that influence how many people will be at 290 Dolores Street on a given Friday. The notion is to look for trends and ensure that we are providing the experiences that meet our members' expectations. From this analysis we may experiment with different types of services and rituals.

In the first three months of Strategic Plan implementation, one of the actions taken by the Ritual Task Force, together with the Ritual Committee, was a recommendation to the Va'ad that Friday Shabbat services begin uniformly at 7:30 pm. (See Announcements on p. 9.)

Finance

The Finance Task Force has a charter that is weighted towards discussion and research in the beginning of the imple-

mentation process, with less weight on concrete results until later in the year. Its goals include reassessing our approach to dues and fundraising, creating broader finance and fundraising leadership, and establishing a list of priorities for allocating resources as revenues grow.

If that sound too geeky, think again. To be sure, Finance keeps the lights on. But Finance is also an incredibly important way in which we are connected with our members. The portion of your budget you carve aside for Congregation Sha'ar Zahav is a reflection of your value system. The way we allocate congregational resources is a reflection of our value system.

In the Green Room after Yom Kippur, I was approached by a member who was curious about the Finance Task Force. She doesn't have a financial background, and wondered if participating on the task force would be right for her. I encouraged her to sign up immediately. Her contribution to the discussions about the path we will take

in Finance is far more important than an ability to operate a calculator with lightning speed.

Don't you want to participate in this discussion too? That question can be rephrased for every one of our Implementation Task Forces. Please contact one of the Task Force Leaders to talk about your role. See contact information on page 3 bottom banner. It's not too late to join in the process of shaping our successful future! If you have questions about which Task Force would be right for you, please send me an email: president@shaarzahav.org.

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(continued from page 1)

her world-class talents and help us draw closer to the Divine. I feel like I pray with greater authenticity, greater kavanah, when I'm with Sharon."

Cantor Bernstein feels very lucky to be able to work with Rabbi Angel. She enthused, "We have a fabulous partnership. Camille is so inspiring, insightful, open-hearted, and wise. Her support has helped me to grow and develop in ways I never anticipated." Cantor Bernstein also spoke about how wonderful it is for her to be able to work with our Educator, Rebecca Weiner, and administrative staff, Regina Wurst and Shaun Hannan. "We are an amazing team, and, with the support and encouragement of the congregation, we are able to create a synagogue community unlike any other."

If you wonder how Cantor Bernstein spends her time with us, here are some of her on-going tasks and responsibilities (and remember, she only works for us half-time): co-leading Shabbat services at least twice a month; organizing and leading many of our holiday services; working with the Ritual Committee; mentoring service leaders; scoping out and introducing new melodies; writing and arranging music; helping to organize our High Holiday services; teaching adult education classes; writing drashes and mentoring other darshanim; mentoring conversion students and participating in batei din; meeting with b'nei mitzvah students, working with them on their drashes and providing them with recordings of their prayers; recording Torah portions for leyners—and that's just a partial list. Cantor Bernstein also says she has "the honor of being with people at the tenderest, most important parts of their lives," during lifecycle events.

Looking toward the future, Cantor Bernstein will continue developing the musical and spiritual life of our shul by helping our service leaders to develop their passion and leadership, including more instrumental music in services, and working with the community to select and introduce new tunes. She will begin teaching Torah

trope in Beit Sefer Phyllis Mintzer this year, hopes to create a home rituals resource booklet, complete with recordings of prayers and songs, and wants to plan fun community gatherings like Shabbes dinners, Havdalah art or dance parties, and show tune sing-alongs.

One of the most beloved annual events that Cantor Bernstein brings to us is **Cantor Unplugged**, sponsored by the Rabbi Julius and Pearl Funk Musical Events Fund. It's an evening designed to give Cantor Bernstein a chance to perform the kind of music she doesn't normally get to do, including lots of show tunes and standards. She says, "Because of **Cantor Unplugged**, all year, when I hear a fabulous song, I get to think, oh! I can do that for **Cantor Unplugged**."

Cantor Bernstein credits CSZ member Carolyn Reiser for making it possible for her to stretch her musical wings. Three years ago, Carolyn began playing piano for **Cantor Unplugged**, and Cantor Bernstein says, "Because Carolyn is such an incredibly skilled and talented musician, I can do anything. I'm not limited to what I can play for myself." Cantor Bernstein also brings other guests artists to join her in the spotlight. Previous years' guests have included CSZ members Henry Carrey and Karen Segal, and outside guests Cantor Leigh Korn, Peter Alexander, and Francesco Spagnolo.

Not surprisingly for our congregation, the dress that Cantor Bernstein wears has become an important part of the evening. As soon as the date is announced each year, people want to know what the outfit will be. Cantor Bernstein says she doesn't yet know what this year's dress will be, "and, if I did know, I wouldn't tell!"

The next **Cantor Unplugged** is **January 26th at 8 pm**. This year, Cantor Bernstein plans on bringing an international element to the stage, singing some Italian popular songs, and possibly some French *chansons* in addition to the core content of show tunes. It's a delightful evening of song, music, and fun—and a chance to see our cantor like you've never seen her before!

After this year's High Holiday services, CSZ member Rita Losch wrote the following poem that really captures the wonder that is Cantor Sharon Bernstein:

OUR LITTLE CANTOR

How cute that
our little cantor
with the big voice,
the big smile,
stands on
a little box
on the bimah,
rising up
on her tippy toes
in her
sparkly sneakers,
while her voice,
her fingers
(each finger
a soul of its own),
connect her,
connect us
to G-d.

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Friendship and Community



Shalom Haverim:

I often speak about the value of Jewish education. Lately I have been reflecting on the community building aspect of children who participate in our program.

Nothing gives me greater pleasure than seeing our students make connections with other students. Some beautiful friendships have been built at Beit Sefer Phyllis Mintzer, and I believe this only helps to build our students' Jewish identity.

These friendships (based on my own life experience) can last a life time, and they become the building blocks for developing an adult Jewish community. Although it is meaningful to have a Jewish practice on your own, so much of Jewish life is a shared experience. I hope that the connections our students make will encourage them to get involved in Jewish life as young adults and onward.

I thought it would be interesting to speak to Jewish perspectives on friendship, on what it means to be a good friend, and how this builds our relationship with our Jewish community and with G-d.

Friendship (11 Proverbs):

The person who only accepts friends without faults will never have any real friends. We are just coming out of the time of reflecting, of doing Teshuva and working to be better people. It seems clear that one of the most important elements of friendship is holding people even through difficult times. Just this morning I was having a conversation with a parent about how young people are so overexposed through social media. Your faults can be magnified by a thousand, and every embarrassing moment can be downloaded in an instance. It is much too easy to spread lashon hara (bad tongue, gossip). I hope that in our curriculum, we give our students guidelines for treating each other

with respect, for allowing each other to make mistakes, and for being agents of change in a world where bullying and bad speech is on the rise.

Make new friends, but don't forget the old ones. Who knew that we had coined this phrase before the girl scouts? It is true that friendships can last a lifetime if you invest time and energy into them. We work hard at BSPM to encourage our students to be inclusive and to avoid forming cliques. In a world of instant gratification and the next new best thing, the concept of loyalty and inclusion is of utmost value. The values that help to create a good person in Judaism, also help to inspire good friendships. I am always moved when I see our students showing genuine compassion to each other, and I believe that we reinforce this value in the classroom and in our philosophy at BSPM.

In the mirror everybody sees his best friend. It is impossible to complete the work of Tikkun Olam (repairing the world) on your own. The people you love should be a reflection of your deepest values. I think, as educators and parents, this is our greatest wish that our children will choose friends that elevate them, that hold them accountable, and who mirror back to them the best of who they can be. We as adults have a great responsibility to model true friendship to young people, it is where they learn their template for picking good friends and for being good friends.

Here is a small midrash that I love on friendship:

"Only Our Relationships Endure"

From *When All You've Ever Wanted Isn't Enough* (Fireside Publishing). by Rabbi Harold Kushner, bestselling author and one of the most recognized rabbis in the world.

I was sitting on a beach one summer day, watching two children, a boy and a girl, playing in the sand. They were hard at work building an elaborate sand castle by the water's edge, with gates and towers and

moats and internal passages. Just when they had nearly finished their project, a big wave came along and knocked it down, reducing it to a heap of wet sand.

I expected the children to burst into tears, devastated by what had happened to all their hard work. But they surprised me. Instead, they ran up the shore away from the water, laughing and holding hands, and sat down to build another castle.

I realized that they had taught me an important lesson. All the things in our lives, all the complicated structures we spend so much time and energy creating, are built on sand. Only our relationships to other people endure. Sooner or later, the wave will come along and knock down what we have worked so hard to build up. When that happens, only the person who has somebody's hand to hold will be able to laugh.

I hope that you will encourage and help to build the friendships that your children build at BSPM. Just today I got a message from a parent that was setting up a play date with her daughter and a friend from BSPM. That is a kvel moment for me.

Here are some of the values that we teach at Beit Sefer to be a good friend:

- Be honest
- Respect boundaries
- Show respect
- Extend yourself
- Share
- Show compassion
- Be vulnerable
- Give hugs
- Make each other laugh; let each other cry

I feel lucky to come to work with so many of my friends, young and old, and I believe that these friendships will help us all in living our lives with Torah and community.

L'Shalom,
Rebecca

Introducing the B'nei Mitzvah

Bernie Choden and Lois Scott

Bernie Choden and Lois Scott, who became b'nei mitzvah on October 13, first came to CSZ more than two decades ago at the suggestion of their friend Stephen Shotland. Daniel Chesir further helped welcome them. Services were then at Danvers and Caselli, in a former church building and the Kadimah classroom was in an attic room up a steep stairway. Lois was working for the San Francisco Planning Department, and Bernie, also trained as an architect, had recently retired as a redevelopment planner/economic specialist from Oakland Office of Community Development. It was natural that they were recruited to assist in making demographic projections for CSZ congregation, and it was easy for them to predict that CSZ would soon outgrow its

existing quarters. They both remember the wonderful march down the hill, singing and carrying the Torah, into the then new and remade Miskan Dolores and feeling bonded to the congregation.

Their daughter Leva was adopted from Paraguay as a new baby in 1991. Leva brought a new dimension to their lives, as older parents who had been caregivers for



their own parents. Leva attended early Tot Shabbats but Kadimah only to the third grade, when she began to have reading issues at her international bilingual school. The change to Synergy School with its multi sensory learning and sports helped reestablish her enthusiasm. She has since graduated from Drew and studied at Sonoma State. Leva recently helped Lois select her tallis for the b'nei mitzvah.

How did Lois and Bernie come to want a b'nei mitzvah together? A few years ago, they enrolled in several of Rabbi Dev Noily's adult education classes at CSZ. The students in the classes, and Rabbi Dev's warm, practical approach to liturgy and history, reinforced Lois's dream of "someday" having a bat mitzvah not only of her own, but

sharing it with Bernie. It had not been an option in the 1950's at her family's reform synagogue in Oakland. Her confirmation when she was a teenager served more to elucidate her uncertainty. Bernie, on the other hand, had his bar mitzvah in an Old World orthodox shul. It was not even his parents' congregation, but walking distance from their house in Detroit. He was given a tallis and, after the ceremony, some whiskey.

With thoughts of a far into the future joint b'nei mitzvah, because Lois felt she did not know enough Hebrew and history, they consulted Rabbi Angel who said it was normal to feel not fully ready, and urged that a date be set now. The parsha B'reishit, Genesis seemed to resonate spiritually and to come full circle for these still idealistic urban planners and pantheists. As far as preparation, technology came to the rescue for Lois with Biblical Hebrew by Israeli telecourses and wonderful iPhone apps that allowed Cantor Bernstein and Rabbi Angel to record their parshot and blessings. And again delightfully, Daniel Chesir mentored them in service leading.

Maxima Batya Alexandra

Bat Mitzvah December 8, 2012

Maxima was named after her great, great grandmother, a strong, generous woman with a wonderful sense of humor—a woman she never met, but mirrors in many ways. Max is naturally curious, full of questions, and quick to start deep discussions, exploring a range of subjects. Max has received numerous scholastic successes, consistently achieving honors at school. Last year, Max won third prize in the city-wide science fair held at the Randall Museum. She is a voracious reader and sneaks off to the library when she is



supposed to be doing her chores. Maxima is creative and shows an aptitude for crafts and inventions of all kinds, from making clothes to wood carving. She is an avid rock climber and swims like a shark. Max participated in a two-week camp this last sum-

mer, where she learned survival and leadership skills while backpacking, kayaking, and rock climbing. Max was one of two girls to complete an ascent blind-folded. Max is a loyal member of the Dr. Who Club. Maxima takes great pride and interest in her Jewish heritage. Because of her love of critters, Max signed up to foster, with her family, several pairs of kittens from the SPCA for a bnei mitzvah project. Max has also volunteered twice weekly to help a teacher during her lunch break and to clean up our favorite spot at McLaren Park.

Cohen Bruno Stein

Cohen Bruno Stein is a 7th grader at Roosevelt Middle School. He will have his bar mitzvah service and celebration on November 17, 2012.

Cohen likes to skateboard, play soccer and basketball, and jog. He was on the Roosevelt track team last year, and plays clarinet in the school band. On the side Cohen likes to play drums and take care of Ginger, the family cocker spaniel. And of course, he has been known to play a video game or two.

Cohen has been with CSZ for many years. He and his sister were in baby chavurah a decade ago, and attended Tot Shabbat here and there before starting BSPM.



For Cohen's tzedakah project, he is volunteering with Rocket Dog Rescue, helping find good owners for dogs without permanent homes.

Cohen would like to thank all of the people who helped him with his Jewish education, consciousness, and growth. In particular, he would like to thank his first teachers Andrea and A.J. Also, he is grateful to Rebecca for helping him with his drash and working on the prayers with him.

Special thanks to Merle Malakoff, his mentor and friend, who has been a tremendous teacher and supporter.

Cohen rules!!

Due to space limitations, we were unable to include a calendar in this issue. Please refer to your weekly emails from CSZ.

g3mh

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Announcements

Friday Shabbat Service Times

BY JAMES CARLSON, PRESIDENT

email: president@shaarzahav.org

At the August Ritual Committee meeting, the committee voted to recommend to the Va'ad to change the time of the Shabbat service on first Friday of the month from 8:15 pm to 7:30 pm starting in October 2012. It was decided that all Friday Shabbat services will now begin at 7:30 pm.

The later starting time of 8:15 pm had been the start time for all Friday night services in the past. When the service time was changed to 7:30 pm many years ago, there was a decision to keep one 8:15 pm service.

Over the past few years, there have been many requests from congregants to have 7:30 pm the consistent time for all services. The multiple start times have caused some confusion and frustration among some members and non-members. When reviewing the request, the committee also looked at programming that has happened before services. It was felt that pre-service programs and dinners have been successful. They also seemed to finish in time for participants to attend a 7:30 pm service.

The Va'ad approved the recommendation, effective October 2012.

Farewell to Herbst

BY JAMES CARLSON, PRESIDENT

email: president@shaarzahav.org

Herbst Theater in San Francisco's Civic Center has been the venue for Congregation Sha'ar Zahav's High Holy Day services for well over a decade. For two years we've known that 2012 would be the last time the Herbst would be available to us.

The Herbst Theatre, which we have come to love as our High Holy Day home, will be undergoing reconstructive surgery. Its renovation process will last well beyond the shofar blasts announcing the arrival of 5774. Since we're too big for our own home on Dolores Street, and Herbst won't be available, we have arranged to have High Holy Day services at the Scottish Rite Temple, located at Sloat Blvd and 19th Avenue.

It was not easy to find a venue that suited our needs as well as the Herbst, but we think the Scottish Rite Temple will be a great replacement. Before we signed the contract, the site was thoroughly vetted for accessibility, convenience to public transportation, breakout spaces we're accustomed to for Yom Kippur, parking, acoustics, etc.

Change is never easy. We'll have to figure out how to set up the lobby for efficient distribution of machzorim. We'll have to figure out how to transform the stage into a Bimah. We'll have to figure out where to have dinner, since Max's won't be on the next block. But we will leap the logistic hurdles as we always do. There will be many follow up stories to keep everyone informed, and to keep anyone from accidentally driving to Civic Center.

This story would be incomplete with a note of thanks. Over the years that we have used the Herbst, we have been treated so well by the incredible staff. Eric Nielsen and his staff of ushers in the theater, and Nadine Neilson, who supervises the Green Room, have been true friends to Congregation Sha'ar Zahav. They knew all of our rituals and routines. I'm grateful for their calmness and kind spirits and indebted to their professionalism. I will miss working with them. *Todah rabah!*

Community Havdalah at Congregation Sha'ar Zahav

BY MAGGID ANDREW RAMER

To be held on the first Saturday evening of every month, beginning on Saturday, December 1st, 7:00 - 8:30 pm, with Maggid Andrew Ramer

Forty years ago I took a class on symbolism with an eighty-year-old Jewish refugee from Nazi Europe. I don't remember her name, although I can still feel the timbre of her voice in my body. And to be honest, the only thing I remember from her class was one single sentence that she said, a quotation from the ancient Greek philosopher Alcmaeon of Croton, who wrote, "Men die from this. They cannot connect their beginnings and their endings." That sentence changed my life, as a person, a writer, and as a Jew.

In a time when life is getting faster and faster, Shabbat can be an island of sanity and renewal, a time of pleasure and ease. Many of us start Shabbat, either at home or in shul, by lighting candles and saying Kiddush and Motzi. We may not say them every week, but we hold that ideal way of beginning Shabbat in our hearts and minds. So we light those candles, or try to, and we begin the Sabbath, but how many of us end it, end it with what to me is the loveliest of all Jewish rituals, Havdalah?

With chanted blessings, a cup of juice or wine, a braided candle, some fragrant spices, Havdalah engages all of our senses. But many Jews I know have never taken part in Havdalah, and it occurred to me that it would be lovely to gather together in our sanctuary for this ritual. Each month I will share Havdalah with other writers, artists, storytellers, filmmakers, and dancers from our community. The first month I will share a few stories about Serach, the Four Thousand Year Old Jewish woman, who you can read about on page 508 in our Siddur. And Shoshana Levenberg will be telling her award-winning story about her Aunt Goldie. I hope that you'll join us for Havdalah, and if you have something you want to share with our community, please let me know.

Jews live from this, we live from this—we connect the beginning of Shabbat and its ending.

Our Legacy Community— 2nd Year Goal Achieved!

Many thanks to the following who signed Letters of Intent to leave a bequest to Congregation Sha'ar Zahav and enabled us to reach our two-year goal:

Anonymous
Rabbi Camille Angel
Marianne Balin
Jesse (Shai) Begley
Dan Bellm & Rabbi Yoel Kahn
Wayne Bender
Ray Bernstein
Francisco Caravayo & Jonathan Strober
James Carlson
Daniel Chesir
Ellie Cohen & Michal Goralsky
Paul Cohen
Aaron Cooper
Robert Daroff
Jonathan Funk
David Gellman
Dr. Avraham Giannini
Allan Gold
Alan Gordon
Sarita Groisser
Alex Ingersoll
Lisa Inman and Alisa Gilden

Batya Kalis
Rose Katz
Eric Keitel
Thomas Lakritz
Walter Leiss
Shoshana Levenberg
Nancy Levin
Deborah Levy
Ron Lezell
Jeffrey Lilly
Patricia Lin
Marc Lipschutz
Gerry Llamado
Laura Lowe
Eileen Lynette
Mark Mackler
Paul Margolis
Steve Mazer
Richard Meyerson
Irene Ogus
Ora Prochovnik & Rena Frantz
Andrew Ramer
Mike Rankin, M.D.
Gerald Rosenstein
Sharyn Saslafsky
Karen Schiller
Andrew Schwartz

Arthur Slepian
William "Bill" Smith
Charles Spiegel
Howard Steiermann
Martin Tannenbaum
Susan Tubbesing
Deborah Udin
Dana Vinicoff
Larry Wexler
Dennis R. Ybarra
Frank Yellin & Mark Showalter
Jonathan Zimman
Mike Zimmerman
Ami Zusman

We will continue to reach out to our membership asking for a bequest to the Our Legacy Community campaign. Our work is not complete. If you'd like to meet with a member of the Legacy Committee to complete your own "Letter of Intent," or if you've already remembered us in your will and want let us know, please contact me: Irene Ogus, irene.ogus@gmail.com

Irene

Why I support the CSZ Our Legacy Community Program

BY RON LEZELL

I write this a few days after our High Holy Day services. In Rabbi Angel's Erev Rosh Hashanah sermon, she asked us to consider, what does it mean to be a Jew? For her, and for me, peoplehood comes closest to an answer. She offers that we are an historic family, connected by collective experience to people we know and will never know, and with whom we share ties of mutual responsibility to transform the world. Wow! Transform the world! Me? You? Us?

As a member of Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, since our 1977 founding, I've become an adult—a Jewish adult—at CSZ. My initial involvement was to make a political statement, not a "religious" statement, as my Jewish background was sadly lacking in meaningful religious content or knowledge (this was to develop over the ensuing 35 years). Together with others in our fledgling congregation, we were out to show that gay and lesbian Jews had as much a right, and responsibility, to be an open and respected part of the Jewish people as anyone else.

Back then, there were no synagogues where gays and lesbians were welcomed to be their full selves as part of the Jewish community. We quickly established ourselves, albeit with challenges to overcome, as members of the Bay Area Jewish community, and after a few years joined the Union for Reform Judaism (formerly UAHC). Working within the Reform "establishment," we led the way in rewriting the Reform position on homosexuality and influenced its liturgy as it related to gender equality. As individuals and as a synagogue, we joined local and national Reform-affiliated and

Jewish Community Federation-related organizations, soon to become active leaders in these movements. Many CSZ members have gone on to become rabbis, cantors, and Jewish educators.

We succeeded in our "political" statement beyond any measure contemplated 35 years ago. Perhaps there is no greater evidence of this success than the fact that LGBT Jews are now welcomed and courted by virtually all Reconstructionist, Reform, Conservative and even modern Orthodox synagogues throughout the U.S., the diaspora and even, increasingly, in Israel. Yes, WE (all members of CSZ – Gay, Lesbian, Straight, Bi, and Transgender) have had much to do with this positive transformation in the Jewish world.

But what comes with this success is a huge challenge for Congregation Sha'ar Zahav. We are no longer the default "go to" shul if you're LGBT or straight supporters of LGBT people. At a time when the synagogue structure within all Jewish movements is under organizational and financial stress, it's up to us to innovate in our liturgy, social and educational outreach, and programs. That continued innovation is evident in our children's education program, Beit Sefer Phyllis Mintzer, and in our B'nei Mitzvah mentorship program, of which I am a proud participant. Who would have thought in the 1970s and 80s that Congregation Sha'ar Zahav would have a thriving children's education program that attracts children of LGBT and straight parents?

How did we become such an important and vibrant part of the Jewish people? I offer that others (parents, grandparents, teachers, and mentors) planted in us the capability, the foundation in secular and Jewish education, to be able to organize and succeed in our evolving mission. Others provided us the basis to advance the Jewish liturgy and to advocate for full involvement and leadership within the established Jewish organizational structure. A wonderful Talmudic story illustrates that providing for others is a responsibility

meant to be passed from one generation to the next:

A traveler saw an old man planting a carob tree. He asked him when he thought the tree would bear fruit. The old man replied, "after 70 years". "You expect to live 70 years and eat the fruit of your labor?" "I did not find the world barren when I entered it," said the old man, "and as my ancestors planted for me before I was born, so do I plant for those who will come after me."

In the Haftarah from Isaiah chanted at Yom Kippur, we are further reminded of the Jewish value of providing for others:

*Is not this the fast I have chosen?
Is it not to share your bread with the hungry?
And to bring the poor to your own house
When you see the tattered, to clothe them
And never to hide from each other's needs?
Then will your light break forth as the morning*

*And quickly will your healing come
Your charity will walk before you
And God's glory cover and protect you
Then you will call and God will answer
You will cry, and I will say "Hineini,
Here am I."*

Please reflect on the journey you've taken as a member of Congregation Sha'ar Zahav. Think of the friends you've made and your own personal advances as an educated and evolving member of the Jewish people. Affirm your shared identity and Jewish vision as you aid future generations and ensure the continued strength of our community. Join me and the approximately 65 CSZ members and friends who have already completed a Letter of Intent to participate in the CSZ Our Legacy Community Program. For information on how to do this, please contact CSZ's Legacy Chair, Irene Ogus (irene.ogus@gmail.com, 415-305-4286). Thank you.

Please Be in Touch With Me

I am eager to be in touch
with all members of
the CSZ family
whenever there are
occasions of joy or sadness
in your lives.

Where there is a death
in the family, please call
me as soon as possible.

We very much want to
be there with you
at a time of grief.

*Rabbi Camille
Shira Angel*

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Helen Schwartz, Pre-need Counselor*

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Cantor's Discretionary Fund

Batya Kalis in appreciation of Cantor Bernstein.

Chai-Cantor

Robert Bernardo

The Leslie & Samuel Kaplan Family Foundation

Laura Lowe

Beth Ross & Laurie Trupin

Chesir/Stein Music

Rose Katz in honor of Reuben Zellman & Erika Katske's wedding.

in honor of Daniel Chesir's retirement.

Rabbi Julius & Pearl Funk Musical Event Fund

Jonathan Funk in memory of Alan Harap.

in memory of Joseph Wiseman.

in memory of Leah Plonchak Rubin.

General Fund

Melanie Aron & Michael Dine in honor of James Carlson.

Allan Berenstein in honor of Daniel Chesir's retirement.

in honor of Erika & Reuben.

in memory of Rabbi Ben Marcus, John Golebowski & Jeffrey Miller.

Ray Bernstein in honor of Reuben & Erika.

Rabbi Cindy Enger in thanks to Rabbi Angel & CSZ - for your leadership and creativity in the worlds where Judaism & LGBTQ possibilities meet.

Steven Gaynes in memory of his father, George Gaynes.

Avraham Giannini in honor of Cantor & Rabbi for Yizkor for the Fallen.
in memory of Mary Lou Giannini.

Deborah Heller in honor of Martin & Alex.

Leo Hill

Jo Ellen Green Kaiser in honor of the aufruf of Erika Katske and Reuben Zellman.

Batya Kalis in appreciation of Rose Katz.
in appreciation of Allan Berenstein.

Rose Katz in memory of Sadie Katz.
in honor of Jenni Olson.

in honor of Rosa Ortega's Welcoming into the Covenant.

in honor of Wendy Brummer's 50th birthday.

in honor of Melissa Moss' new job at the JCCSF.

Gabriel Lampert in memory of his family members.

Jordan & Carol Levitin in memory of Carol's brother, Frank Hyman.

Gerry Llamado & Arthur Slepian in honor of Reuben & Erika.

Sarah Nathe in memory of Pearl Nathe.

Brad Post & Susan Leff

Ora Prochovnick & Rena Frantz in honor of Reuben & Erika's wedding.

Herman & Rosalie Rosenbaum in honor of the 60th birthday of Tom Holt.

Toby Rubin in honor of Paul Cohen's birthday.

Karen Schiller in celebration of Erika & Reuben's wedding.

TRCP, Inc.

Susan Tubbesing in memory of aunt, Doris Bezman.

in memory of Phyllis Cohen;

Laura Bezman.

Dayna Whitmer in thanks to CSZ and the Yizkor for the Fallen.

High Holiday Pledges 5773 (as of 10/10/12)

Elliot Block in memory of Herman Block.

Helen Dannenberg in memory of Hetty Rosen Shapiro.

Donald Abrams

Roberta Achtenberg

Yvette & Pierre Adida

Maureen Anderson

Jessie Ap'neva & Nina Wouk

Marianne Balin

Ann Bauman & Kelly Thiemann

Judith Bell & Jim Greenberg

Lindsay Bellows

Wayne Bender

Allan Berenstein

Claudia Bernard & Howard Herman in memory of George Bernard.

Lucy Bernholz & Paula Fleisher

Maria Bernstein

Ray Bernstein

Mary & Tony Bianco in honor of Eve Meyer's sermon on Rosh Hoshanah.

Jonathan Bibayan

Judith Blankman

Elliot Block in honor of Herman Block.

Susan Bluer

Lindsey Blumenthal

Aaron Buchbinder

Diana Buchbinder & Jeane Redsecker

Kyra Busch

Patricia Byers

Ali & Jessica Cannon

James Carlson in honor of the High Holiday days darshan, pitchers, service leaders, gabbais, & volunteers.

Michael Chertok

Daniel Chesir

Paul Cohen & Bob Gutterman

Helen Dannenberg in memory of Hetty Rosen Shapiro.

Lisa Danzig

Jennie Dorman

Eileen Dunn

Ron Edelman

Lynn Eden & Ruth Schoenbach

Jon Feldman

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Terry Fletcher & Glen Hauer

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Philip & Irene Gallas

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Gerry Llamado & Arthur Slepian in memory of Fred Tannenbaum

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 Francie McGowan
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 for the honor of delivering a drash on Rosh Hashana.
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 James Carlson Herbst Theatre rental costs - in memory of Mary Jeanne Carlson.
 Michael Chertok Herbst Theatre rental costs.
 David Gellman & Salo Rawet Herbst Theatre rental costs - in honor of Rabbi Angel.
 Allan Gold Herbst Theatre rental costs.
 Sara Haber & Beth Sousa Bimah greenery.
 Alex Ingersoll & Martin Tannenbaum Herbst Theatre rental costs.
 Tom Lakritz Rosh Hashanah flowers.
 Walter Leiss Erev Rosh Hashanah Oneg and Yom Kippur Break-Fast.
 Laura Lowe 2nd Day Rosh Hashanah oneg.
 High Holiday cleaning services.
 Richard Meyerson High Holiday childcare.
 Dr. Larry Rand Yom Kippur flowers - in honor of Aaron Danzig.
 Karen Schiller Herbst Theatre rental costs.
 Andy Schwartz & John Mark Eggerton Yom Kippur flowers.
 Arthur Slepian & Gerry Llamado Herbst Theatre rental costs.
 Larry Wexler Herbst Theatre rental costs.

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Allan Berenstein in memory of the fallen - known & unknown - Rabbi Angel, Cantor Bernstein, Alan Gordon, Jenni Olson, et al - thanks for helping us member.

Marius Greenspan
 Rabbi Yoel Kahn in honor of the 25th wedding anniversary of Michael Bettinger & Bob Goldstein.
 Batya Kalis in appreciation of Rabbi Angel.
 Eileen Klein in honor of Erika Katske & Reuben Zellman.
 Jeane Redsecker & Diana Buchbinder in loving memory of (Irving) Robert Buchbinder.

Rainbow Fund 5772


Alice Herron
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August

3/4

Bimah Flowers generously sponsored by **CSZ's Past Presidents** In honor of Daniel Chesir

Friday Oneg Anonymously sponsored In honor of Daniel Chesir

10/11

Bimah Flowers generously donated and arranged by **James Carlson** In memory of his mother, Jan Tuzzolino

Friday Oneg Generously Sponsored by **Stan & Anita Mishook** In honor of the anniversary of David Mishook and Meg Keene & in honor of David leading services

17/18

Bimah Flowers Generously Sponsored by **Ann Bauman & Kelly Thiemann** In honor of Reuben & Erika

Friday Oneg Generously Sponsored by **Rabbi Reuben Zellman & Erika Katske** In honor of their aufruf

24/25

Friday Oneg Generously Sponsored by **Alice Harron** In memory of her mother, Bernice Kahn Harron

Bimah Flowers Generously Sponsored by **Wendy Brummer** In memory of Bernice Kahn Harron

August / September

Aug. 31 / Sep. 1

Friday Oneg Anonymously Sponsored In honor of Karen Schiller's leadership

Bimah Flowers Generously Donated and Arranged by **Jan Haber**

September

7/8

Friday Oneg Generously Sponsored by **Jay Davidson, Rose Katz, Ora Prochovnick and Paul Cohen** In honor of Andrew Ramer becoming our Maggid &

Lisa Katz and Sharon Heath In honor of our guest darshan, Helena Stoltzfus

14/15

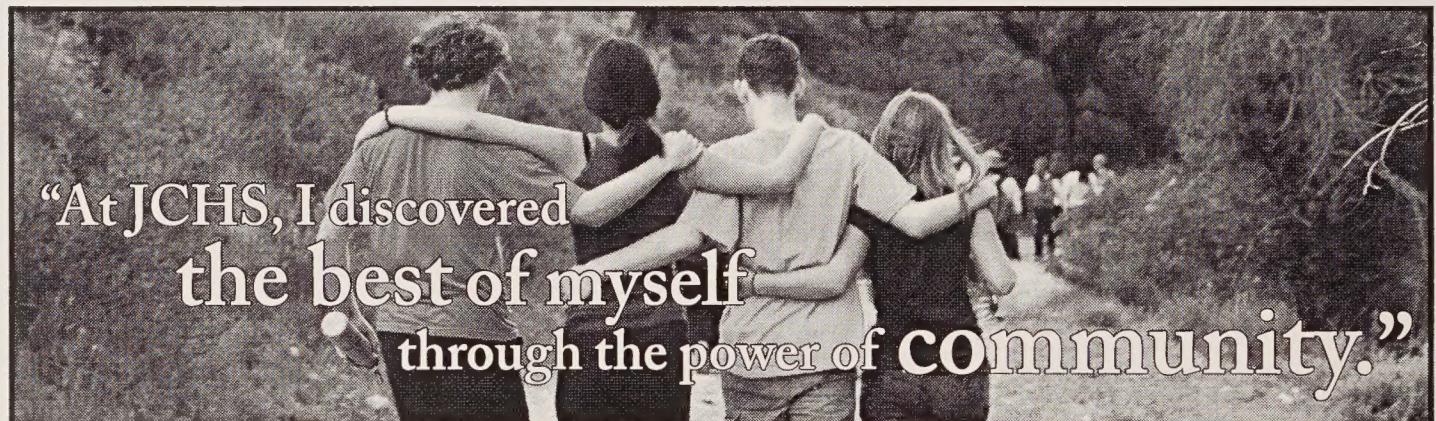
Bimah Flowers Generously Sponsored by **Joan Goldman** In memory of her parents, Al & Ruth Goldman

Friday Oneg Generously Sponsored by **David Lowe** In honor of his husband, Daniel McGoldrick

28/29

Friday Night Live Dinner Generously Sponsored by **Karen Schiller** In honor of Alisa Gilden

Friday Oneg Generously Sponsored by **James Carlson** In memory of his grandfathers, Arthur Carlson and Filippo Tuzzolino



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Naches

Mazel Tov to Erika Katske and Rabbi Reuben Zellman on their marriage.

Condolences

Our condolences to Anne Bluethenthal on the death of her friend Remy Charlip.

Our condolences to Ray MacLachlan on the death of his father, David MacLachlan.

Our condolences to Terry Fletcher on the death of her uncle, Winston Fletcher

Our condolences to Ryan Buchholz Mandel on the death of his friend, Edith Treder.

Our condolences to Barbara Cymrot on the loss of her mother, Bettie Cymrot.

Our condolences to Nathan Kling on the loss of his grandmother, Evelyn Gray.

Our condolences to Martin Tannenbaum on the loss of his father, Fred Tannenbaum.

Welcome to New Members

Ernie DeLaGarza
Dona Hirschfield-White
Noah and Dori Jacob
Michael Kalb
Smadar Lavie
Jeffrey Levin and Victor Meras
Michael and Jane Rice
Yolande Schneeman
Evelyn Slenker

Member Yahrzeits

November

3 Forrest Kincade
7 Donald Albert
11 Bruce Apter
11 Matthew Rostoker
12 Dr. Richard Wright
13 Harvey Levine
16 Chuck Norton
22 Tristano Palermino
27 Harvey Milk

December

4 Mailyn O'Keeffe
9 Nicholas Papadopoulos
18 David Glassberg
20 Norman D. Kramer
21 Walter Palmer
22 Elijah M Silverrod MacLachlan
28 Phyllis Mintzer
29 Allan Craig



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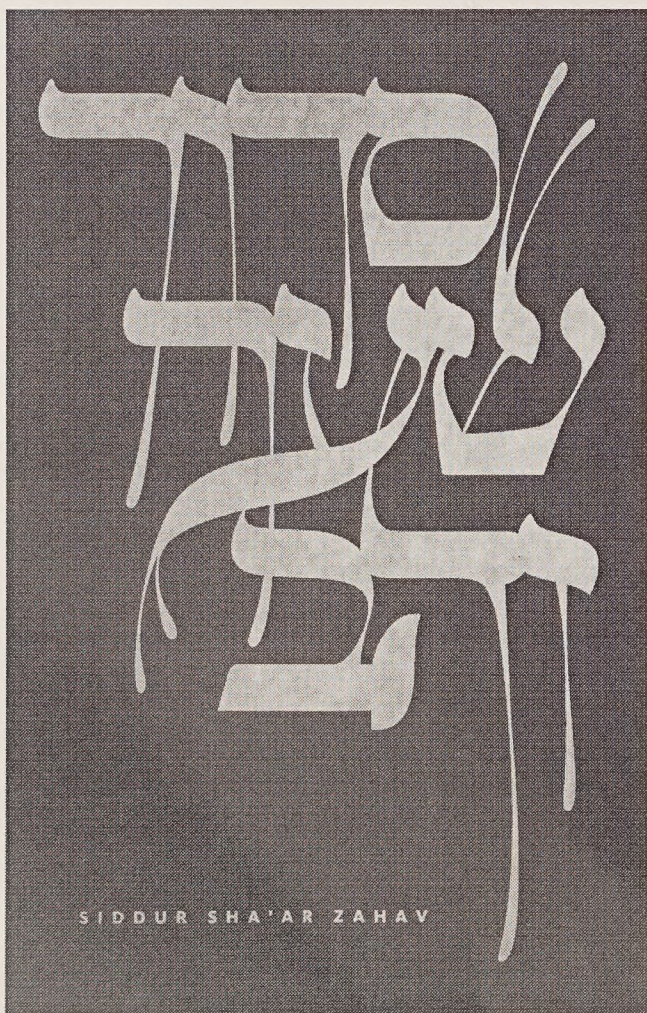
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